

Applicant has amended claims 1 - 3 herein below. It is believed that claims 1 - 3 as amended below now distinguish the present invention over the cited art.

Applicant has amended claims 16 - 23 to now depend from allowed claim 4. Therefore, it is urged that these claims 16 -23 should now also be further examined and allowed. Applicant has amended claims 29 - 34 to now depend from claim 1. It is urged that these claims 29 - 34 should now also be further examined and allowed as depending from allowable presently claim 1.

Allowed claim 4 is being further amended to correct a typographical error, as there is no antecedence for shaft "portions". The antecedent term used is shaft "sections". Allowed claim 5 is being amended further to correct the spelling of "respective" which had the "s" missing.

In the Claims:

Amend the claims 1-34 as follows.

1. (Twice amended) A load floor latch, comprising:

a load floor lid;

a pawl member positioned with respect to said load floor lid to extend beyond thereof for having a portion thereof engage a keeper structure for retaining said load floor lid in the closed position, said pawl member having a ramped striker surface; and

an actuation assembly having a handle and an associated structure which acts upon ~~an exterior~~ said ramped striker surface of said pawl member which ramped striker surface ~~face~~ being proximate said keeper engagement portion of said pawl member.

2. (Twice amended) The load floor latch of claim 1, ~~wherein said pawl member exterior face has an exterior ramped surface~~; and wherein said actuation assembly includes a camming member which operates against said ~~exterior ramped~~ striker surface of said pawl member to move said pawl member away from said keeper structure position.

3.(Twice amended) The load floor latch of claim 1 , wherein said pawl member includes a body portion and a living spring integral with said body portion and ~~extend~~ extending in longitudinal alignment ~~line~~ therefrom to longitudinally change length when said body portion is moved.

4. (Allowed, now amended further) A load floor latch comprising:

an actuation assembly;

a pawl member;

a lid having connected therewith said actuation assembly and said pawl member;

and

a lid cover enclosing said lid and said pawl member;

wherein said actuation assembly includes a hoop-shaped handle, a pair of L-shaped arms extending therefrom, and detent features located at the distal ends of each L-shaped arm;

wherein said L-shaped arms each also have stops attached to the distal end thereof;

wherein said actuation assembly further includes a leg actuation element having two identical shaft sections connected by a center shaft, wherein said identical shaft sections each have a first end having apertures therein for attachment to said detent features at said distal end of a respective mating one of said L-shaped arms, and each have a second end having snap-in shaft member extending substantially parallel to said center shaft of said actuation element, wherein on one side of each said identical shaft portions sections is included a strength rib..

5. (Allowed, now amended further) The load floor latch of claim 4, wherein each said identical shaft section has a camming surface for abutting said stops attached to said distal end of said respective L-shaped arm.

6. (Allowed) The load floor latch of claim 5, wherein said pawl member comprises:

a body portion having a slam action-type ramped element at one end;

a living spring having one end thereof integral with and extending from the other end of said body portion; and

a pawl tail integral with and extending from the of said living spring.

7. (Allowed) The load floor latch of claim 6, wherein said lid includes a pair of central walls, said central walls defining a slot area for positioning said pawl member, and a pair of sidewalls, each said central wall being connected to a respective sidewall by a perpendicular wall.

8.(Allowed) The load floor latch of claim 7, wherein said perpendicular walls each have a positioning tabs to align a respective said snap-in shaft member of one of said identical shaft sections, wherein during activation said hoop-shaped handle is pulled upward , said leg actuation element contacts the lid thereby causing said center shaft thereof to contact and slide upward along said ramped element of said pawl member body portion thereby causing said body portion to retract into said lid against the bias of said living spring.

9. (Allowed) The load floor latch of claim 8, wherein said lid cover includes a camming structure positioned between said central walls for camming said living spring during activation and slam action closure of said latch.

10. (Allowed) The load floor latch of claim 9, wherein said camming structure is a diagonal camming surface extending from said lid to in between said central walls, the end of said diagonal camming surface holding said pawl tail against said lid.

11. (Allowed) The load floor latch of claim 9, wherein said camming structure is a cross member pawl tail holder extending between said central walls, said pawl tail being held against said lid by said pawl tail holder.

12. (Allowed) The load floor latch of claim 11, wherein said lid includes an aperture for accessibility to said pawl tail.

13. (Allowed) The load floor latch of one of claims 10 to 11, wherein said lid is flat and continuous.

14. (Allowed) The load floor latch of one of claims 10 to 11, wherein said lid cover is flat and compliments the shape of said lid.

15. (Allowed) The load floor latch of claim 11, wherein said cross member pawl tail holder is a support bar which traverses said slot area and is attached to each of said central walls.

16. (Reinstated - amended A- The load floor latch of claim 4, further including comprising :

a. ~~an actuation assembly;~~

b. ~~a pawl member;~~

c. a housing for maintaining said actuation assembly and said pawl member;

wherein said housing comprises a pair of side wall sections having an interior and exterior surfaces, wherein said pair of sidewalls connected by a perpendicular sidewall, wherein said pair of side wall sections define a slot area having a back wall for positioning of said pawl member, wherein said exterior surfaces contain a plurality of snap legs, wherein said side walls have a plurality of aperture for attachment of said actuation assembly; and

d. a lid having a plurality of walls designed to compliment the shape of said housing for attachment thereof, wherein said walls have engagement recesses.

17. (Reinstated - original) The load floor latch of claim 16, wherein said actuation means comprises a hoop actuation element having a hoop handle attached proximal to a pair of L-shaped arms extending therefrom, wherein said L-shaped arms have integral detent features on the distal ends.

18. (Reinstated - original) The load floor latch of claim 17, wherein said actuation means further comprises a leg actuation element having two identical shaft sections connected by a center shaft, wherein said identical sections have a first end having apertures therein for attachment to said detent features on said hoop actuation and a second end having snap-in shaft member substantially parallel to said center shaft for attachment to said side walls of said lid, wherein during activation of said latch said leg actuation element contact said lid when said hoop handle is pulled upward causing said central shaft to slide upward along

said ramped element against the bias of said living spring thereby forcing the pawl member to disengage a frame

19. (Reinstated - original) The load floor latch of claim 18, wherein said pawl member comprises a body portion integral at one end with a living spring wherein said living spring terminates with a pawl tail, wherein a second end of said body portion comprises a slam action ramped element.

20. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim 19 20, wherein said pawl body portion has extended side sections each having a sliding surface thereon.

21. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim 24 20, wherein said slot area of said housing comprising a pair of guide attached to said interior surface of said pair of side wall sections for guiding and restraining said sliding surfaces of said extended area of said pawl member body, wherein said slot further comprises a pawl holder for camming said pawl tail.

22. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim 19 20, wherein said housing comprising a protruding flange and a surface flange for attachment to said lid, wherein said back wall comprises a slot for positioning of said pawl tail.

23. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim 22 23, wherein said lid has a flange slot for mating with said protruding flange of said housing, wherein the housing further includes mounting studs for mating with said snap legs of said housing.

24. (Twice amended) A load floor latch comprising:

a lid housing;

a pawl member positioned within said lid housing for slide operation outwardly from said housing, said pawl member including spring biasing to an outwardly position and a ramped striker surface for striking a keeper;

an actuation means for retracting said pawl member into said lid housing while lifting said lid housing said actuation means retraction of said pawl member includes providing a force on an outer surface of said pawl member;-and

a-means for attachment to a panel member.

25. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim 24 ~~25~~, wherein said actuation means comprises a hoop handle entrapped within said biasing means, wherein said pawl member extends therefrom.

26. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim 25 which further comprises a body portion having a first end and a second end, wherein said first end is integral with said means for attachment to a panel.

27. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim ~~27~~ 26, wherein said means for attachment to a panel is a forward bezel lid hook which is continuous with said living spring.

28. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim ~~27~~ 26, wherein said second end of said body portion includes a downwardly extending bezel lid snap-in leg, wherein said snap-in legs terminates in a rear bezel lid snap-in hook.

29. (Reinstated - amended) A- The load floor latch of claim 1, further including comprising :

~~a. an actuation means;~~

~~b. a pawl member;~~

~~c. a biasing means for engaging and disengaging said pawl member from a frame;~~

~~d. a housing having a pair of side walls, a rear wall, a top portion, a bottom portion, a horizontal flange protruding outward from the bottom portion defining a hole and an outwardly extending flange around said top portion and said side portions of said housing.; and~~

~~f. a lid support device to secure said latch to a frame.~~

30. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim ~~30~~ 29, further comprising an ejector having a shafts extending outward for pivotably securing said ejector to said housing.

31. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim ~~34~~ 30, wherein said housing has a central button portion having at least one slot located above an ejector stop, wherein a spring guide is located centrally, wherein a button spring having a first end and a second end wherein said first end is attached to said spring guide, wherein said second member of said button spring contact said central button portion, wherein a pair of ejector holes are located below for attachment of said ejector.

32. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim ~~32~~ 31, wherein said button portion includes a pair of stop tabs dimensioned and configured to mate with said slot on said housing.

33. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim ~~33~~ 32, wherein said actuation means is a button member having a front side, back side, face portion, bottom sides and top sides wherein said button member is attached to said housing by a pair of detent features located on said side portions of said button member wherein said button portion rotates within a pair of holes in said side walls of said housing.

34. (Reinstated - amended) The load floor latch of claim ~~34~~ 33, wherein said ejector member comprises an ejector spring guide is biased by a spring attached to said bottom portion.